



## Quality Produce Makes Uganda a Key Exporter



Photo: USAID/Susie Clay

Workers in the cold-store at the airport in Entebbe, Uganda stack pallets of fresh produce for export made possible by USAID.

Fruit and vegetables such as avocados, french beans, sweet potatoes, cabbage, and ginger grow in abundance year-round in Uganda. Although the exporting of these goods began in the early 1990's, little quality produce survived the exporting process to encourage repeat customers in Europe. The problem stemmed from poor agricultural systems and lack of infrastructure. Exporters transported their produce in non-temperature controlled trucks. Although a cold-store facility was built at the airport's cargo terminal, it remained unused due to management problems. Over time, foreign demand for Uganda's produce decreased because of its poor quality and short shelf life.

USAID funded the Investing in Developing Export Agriculture project to establish a new export management company called Fresh Handling Ltd., owned and managed by the exporters themselves. Fresh Handling Ltd. refurbished the facilities at the airport, purchased needed equipment (dollies, pallet insulating covers, and temperature monitoring equipment) and established an office. The growers themselves have come to realize the benefits of working together and sharing information.

The result has been a dramatic increase in the volume of produce exported from 180 metric tons to over 500 metric tons, an increase of 177% in two years. Fresh Handling Ltd. currently manages 67% of all Uganda's fresh produce exports and offers a range of services to growers including consolidation, chartering, handling, documentation, storage, market clearance, and delivery into London, Brussels, and Amsterdam. USAID has demonstrated that dedicated handling of perishable products by exporters working together can result in quality improvements, better prices for growers, and efficient export of fresh produce.

Photo & Caption

